

House Attempts Override of Presidential Veto of State Children's Health Care Insurance Program (SCHIP)

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) today voted in support of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by voting to override the President's veto of bipartisan legislation to provide health care to 10 million children nationwide. Unfortunately, the anti-SCHIP coalition sided with President Bush to sustain the veto and prevent Congress from modernizing and expanding SCHIP coverage to 3.8 million children eligible for health care -- including 440,000 Texas children.

"I am deeply disappointed that once again, House Republicans chose politics over progress and refused to override the President's veto of the Children's Health Insurance Program," said Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez. "There are over 1.4 million children in Texas without health insurance, and without CHIP that statistic would be even higher. In 2007, slightly more than 325,000 Texas children were enrolled in CHIP. An override of the President's veto of the Children's Health Insurance Program would have provided Texas the resources to cover an additional 440,000 children. The SCHIP program is more critical than ever as parents struggle in a weak economy to afford healthcare for their children."

The SCHIP legislation vetoed by the President provided a \$35 billion expansion of the SCHIP program and would have provided health care coverage to 10 million children. The legislation was backed by Republicans and Democrats in both houses of Congress and enjoyed support from Governors of both parties. Additionally, a series of new polls indicated overwhelming public support for SCHIP, with as much as 81 percent of the country backing the bipartisan Congressional plan.

The existing SCHIP program was extended in December until March 2009-but, without this legislation, 3.8 million additional low-income children who are eligible, but not enrolled will not be covered under the program. In addition, state budget shortfalls and administrative rules from President Bush put children who are covered now in jeopardy of losing health care.

###